



# West Valley View

*The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ*

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Tuesday, September 18, 2007

## Disagreements could slow down I-10 acceleration

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Attempts to speed up widening of Interstate 10 keep going and going and going.

At its Monday meeting, the Avondale City Council voted unanimously to approve a \$7 million intergovernmental agreement that would reimburse Avondale, Goodyear and Litchfield Park for interest on the funds for the accelerated I-10 widening project from Loop 101 to Sarival Avenue.

But the agreement is anything but final. Several terms and provisions need to be worked out among the three Southwest Valley cities, the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Arizona Department of Transportation before the project can move along, said Andrew McGuire, Avondale's attorney.

All entities involved are expected to participate in a conference call Wednesday afternoon to resolve disagreements and uncertainties pertaining to the intergovernmental agreement, he said.

### Money matters

The past month has been plagued with conflicts and disagreements among the participating parties with regard to I-10 funds.

On Aug. 22, the MAG Regional Council voted 14 to 10 to dedicate the full \$10 million, previously promised by the Legislature, to the widening project.

"However, during the voting process, a weighted vote was called, and because the weight is based on population, the larger cities that voted no were successful in blocking the motion," said Shirley Gunther, Avondale's intergovernmental affairs manager.

The motion that passed the Regional Council was a recommendation to allow \$6 million of the \$10 million to be applied to Avondale, Goodyear and Litchfield Park for their share of the local interest costs.

On Aug. 27, the Goodyear City Council agreed to accept "at least" \$6 million of the legislatively appropriated \$10 million for the I-10 widening acceleration project.

But the following week, the Avondale and Litchfield Park city councils directed their respective mayors to return to MAG and seek more than \$6 million for I-10 widening acceleration project. They were successful in garnering an additional \$1 million for the project.

### Splitting shares

"The draft agreement that was adopted by our council treats the first \$6 million based on the lane mile split, which is exactly what the Goodyear Council adopted at the end of August," Avondale City Manager Charlie McClendon said.

"But our council has taken the position, since Avondale and Litchfield Park were insistent on going back to MAG to get additional funding, that the additional funding should go back to Avondale and Litchfield Park for our respective shares," he said.

That idea is problematic, said Laurie Hillebrands, chief of staff for the Goodyear mayor and council.

"The agreement among the three cities was to split the amount based on lane mileage. Goodyear's percentage was 58.5 percent, Avondale's was 38.5 percent, and Litchfield Park, they don't have any lane mileage in their city, but they offered to pay three percent," Hillebrands said.

"If that extra million were to be split between Avondale and Litchfield Park, that would make our obligation an increase beyond 58.5 percent to what I think is about 74 percent," she said, adding the project would almost certainly be delayed because of continued disagreements.

McGuire said, in order for any of the funds to be appropriated, the state transportation board, which meets Friday, has to approve the appropriation.

"Normally, we don't bring in an IGA for final adoption until all the parties have agreed to it," McClendon said. "In this case, we felt pressured to act on it prior to the state transportation board meeting Friday.

"To do that, we advised council that they were adopting an agreement that would have to be amended because there were some key points to be worked out. I think what they did [Monday] night showed their commitment to the project, their commitment to moving it forward and their commitment to paying their fair share, whatever that might be."

The Litchfield Park City Council is expected to consider the agreement at its meeting 7 p.m. Wednesday, at the Litchfield Library, 101 W. Wigwam Blvd., Litchfield Park.

The State Transportation Board meeting is at 9 a.m. Friday at Sedona Council Chambers, 102 Roadrunner Drive, Sedona.

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